

might slowed temporalities manifest within, mutate, distend, or recalibrate moving-image works?

Because of its brevity, *Joseph Cornell versus Cinema* leaves unanswered a significant number of questions. How does the soundtrack operate across the entirety of Cornell's films, and how have their scores altered over the years? Which other experimental filmmakers might be part of, or contributors to, Turvey's "revelationist tradition"? In what ways can Cornell's screen works be compared with and connected to those of James Benning and Sharon Lockhart, figures identified by Pigott as appropriate successors, "the legacy of Cornell finally gaining recognition"?²¹ Pigott, however, acknowledges his own book's openness, the many threads of exploration that it unravels but leaves hanging. In his final paragraph, he describes *Joseph Cornell versus Cinema* as "the opening stages of a potentially productive engagement, just a few avenues of thought."²² Certainly, his book serves as a valuable resource of ideas and argument for future scholarship on Cornell and experimental film. *

21 Ibid., 105.

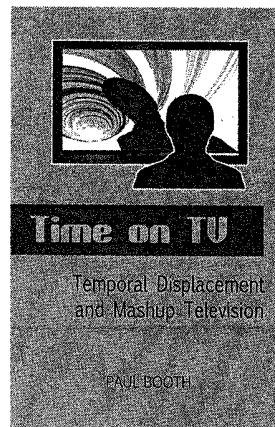
22 Ibid., 111.

Time on TV: Temporal Displacement and Mashup Television

by Paul Booth. Peter Lang.
2012. \$141.95 hardcover; \$39.95 paper. 255 pages.

reviewed by MYLES McNUTT

Fittingly for a book on the subject of temporal displacement, we can start at the conclusion. As Paul Booth comes to the end of *Time on TV: Temporal Displacement and Mashup Television*, he speaks to the future of television but notes "prognostications of the future of any media technology are fraught with difficulty. By the time this book arrives on the bookshelves, any predictions may already be laughably redundant (how's that for temporal displacement?)." Equal parts reflexive regarding the speed of scholarship and reflective as it concerns the temporality of studies



1 Paul Booth, *Time on TV: Temporal Displacement and Mashup Television* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 213.

of contemporary media, Booth's comment highlights one of his book's best qualities. His interest lies in television's intersection with what he identifies as "transgenic media," or forms of online media like Tumblr that invite user participation and that—drawing on transgenic's biological origin of new genes transforming an organism—"[enact] new structures and aesthetics while remaining tethered to old processes and uses."² But by his own admission, these transformations are happening at a rapid rate, both in the development of new networks and in the evolution of old ones (with "old" being an intensely relative term). Booth's challenge becomes slowing down the transgenic train enough to make the connections he sees between these new media forms and the televisual form visible to a reader who comes to them years later, when there could well be transgenic spaceships.

However, much as Booth defends the future of television against claims of its obliteration, *Time on TV* defends its own analysis against the speed of technological development by anchoring it in the reader's own experience. Booth's central argument is built on "the connection between the form of temporal displacement witnessed in contemporary television and a similar postmodern fragmentation perceived in our own lives, as we eke our way through a highly mediated twenty-first century."³ While acknowledging extensive work on convergence and transmedia as industrial practices, as well as his own work on online fan communities, Booth rightly observes a lack of scholarly attention to "how digital technology can affect the content and form of traditional media."⁴

That being said, Booth's interests do remain at least in part with the audience as the book explores how viewers' participation in temporally complex contemporary television narratives echoes their participation in their own temporally complex lives as mediated through transgenic media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace (which earns the designation of the platform that has been rendered most "out of date" in the book by the passage of time). As a result, while Booth outlines a range of case studies of specific television series—most notably *Doctor Who* (BBC, 1963–), *Lost* (ABC, 2004–2010), and *How I Met Your Mother* (CBS, 2005–2014)—he also continually grounds that analysis through personal anecdotes of transgenic experience. While someone who is on no social platforms has Booth's personal experience to frame the book's symbolic analysis of television through the lens of transgenic media, those of us on too many social media platforms can fill in our own experiences.

As I was reading the book, many of Booth's examples activated not only my past use of social media platforms but also my present engagement with those same platforms, such as when his discussion of Facebook "death" profiles and transgenic temporality converged with a college friend's memorialization unfolding on my Facebook feed in real time.⁵ Although not all of Booth's readers may have posted on fan-run wikis like *Tardis.wikia*—the focus of chapter 5's investigation of the production of narrative and history in the context of the "timey-wimey" *Doctor Who*—or have

2 Ibid., 8. Emphasis in original.

3 Ibid., 20.

4 Ibid., 23. For Booth's previous work, see *Digital Fandom: New Media Studies* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010).

5 Ibid., 116.

even watched the shows he discusses, the continued efforts to push readers to engage their own subject position makes Booth's transgenic framework for television criticism both accessible and resonant. As someone who watches many of the shows in question and participates in at least some of the transgenic activities outlined throughout the book, my experience of reading the book began to embody its second section, focused on memories as I relived my own personal history of blogging about *Lost* and puzzling over its flashbacks and flash-forwards.

Booth's two central sections, focused on memories and temporalities, offer compelling and well-drawn textual analysis, effectively framed through symbolic ties to transgenic media practices that inform Booth's readings of the shows in question. In chapters 2 and 3, his focus on how television represents memory and builds character histories relative to time helps contextualize the place of temporality within what Jason Mittell has since—continuing the temporal displacement—framed as “complex television.”⁶ Booth productively charts temporal complexity among a range of different series emerging during this period, including *Flashforward* (ABC, 2009–2010), *Life on Mars* (BBC, 2006–2007), and *Ashes to Ashes* (BBC, 2008–2010). Meanwhile, he digs deeper into temporal displacement as an operational aesthetic with chapter 4, using the time travel in *Doctor Who* to consider the codification of temporal narratives. Chapter 6, although ostensibly part of this second section, breaks into new territory, exploring the productivity of thinking about character networks on shows like *Lost* as social networks and the way networked narratives are tied to our own networked histories.

Well-written and compelling, Booth's book makes a valuable contribution to studies of television textuality and offers a valuable framework for thinking about how that textuality can be contextualized through its relationship to other media. However, as much as Booth's symbolic connections between television and transgenic media are productive, they are also limited. Booth uses the phrase “mashup television” to describe the textual forms identified in the book, although it is used in different ways that create confusion rather than clarity. First, and most broadly, Booth argues that “today's television programs ‘mashup’ characteristics of online media with characteristics of traditional media,” citing *Community*'s (NBC/Hulu, 2009–) intensified mediation as a televisual manifestation of Tumblr.⁷ He goes on, however, to argue that temporal displacement in television is also a form of mashup in which a series “‘mashes up’ two time frames to create one complex narrative.”⁸ He then concludes by framing mashup as a metaphor, claiming that “we can arrive at a deeper meaning of the spectacle of temporal displacement, both on television and in our own lives, through the recognition of the individual ‘inputs’ that mashup to form these new outputs.”⁹ Beyond creating some confusion as to the term's ultimate meaning, particularly given that it is mentioned only five times outside of the book's introduction and conclusion,

6 Jason Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

7 Booth, *Time on TV*, 12.

8 *Ibid.*, 13.

9 *Ibid.*, 14.

the various uses of the term speak to two areas in which Booth's argument could use either expansion or clarification.

To the former, Booth's observations regarding *Community* and other series frame mashup as a process, which one could productively explore through a consideration of production culture. Booth positions his focus on textual analysis as a complement to industrial analysis, rightfully noting that “to research one is to elucidate the other.”¹⁰ However, although Booth broadly frames mashup as a conscious engagement with evolving transgenic media practices by producers, the book draws minimally on comments made by showrunners or writers regarding temporal displacement and the impact of these media technologies on their creative process. While Booth is right to observe that there is room for greater focus on television textuality, and models this focus well, his framing of mashup implies an industrial perspective that emerges in the book's introduction, but it does not reemerge to connect the book's textual analysis to industrial discourses around these series, which is a missed opportunity.

Moreover, an industrial perspective—even as a supporting, rather than primary, method—would expand to consider the way the reception of these series reshapes our understanding of the textual trends Booth charts throughout the book. One of the most glaring absences in Booth's analysis is that he never fully acknowledges how many of the texts he references would go on to be considered failures. While shows like *The Event* (NBC, 2010–2011)—which serves as a central case study in the introductory chapter—may embody the qualities of temporally complex television as Booth identifies them, that show and others also failed to connect with audiences, a fact Booth mentions only in passing in an endnote. By situating the temporal complexity of shows like *The Event*, or *Flashforward*, or *The Nine* (ABC, 2006–2007), or *The Chicago Code* (Fox, 2011)—all of which were canceled after a single season—as a by-product of the audience's increased aptitude for engaging with those texts through transgenic media, making such complexity viable, how can we read the failure of those shows? Their failure does not dismantle Booth's metaphor so much as it explores the limits of temporal complexity, which would have helped position this textual trend within the broader context of television development in which these texts ultimately rest.

The lack of clarity regarding mashup television extends to our understanding of who precisely is responsible for the mashup in question. Whereas in some cases mashup is framed through the text itself, and thus the writers and producers responsible for that text, in others the mashup comes through the audience engaging with that text, and in the case of the metaphor it is Booth himself—and the reader, by extension—doing the mashing up by drawing a symbolic connection between, for instance, social networks and character networks that is not present in the text itself. The confusion does not devalue any of these forms of analysis, but its attempt to use a single term to describe them is questionable and makes it challenging to leave the book with a definition of the term that could be easily or clearly applied in other contexts.

The general idea of exploring contemporary television through the lens of transgenic media is well demonstrated by the book and results in compelling and original readings of the texts in question that show the value of textual analysis and

10 *Ibid.*, 27.

the drawing of connections between media in completing such analysis; however, the lack of clarity regarding mashup television muddies the book's thesis. The book uses terms like "mirrors" and "reflects" to describe the relationship between temporally complex television and transgenic media, but such words could be used more sparingly and more critically. While Booth draws salient connections between contemporary television and transgenic media, they are not mirrored or reflected so much as they are mediated and remediated, either explicitly or implicitly, a process that Booth's book simplifies at times in ways that weaken its central argument.

Building on the book's effective structuring mechanism of quotes from Charles Yu's novel *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe*, Booth observes, "Today we all live in a 'science fictional' universe, where digital technology has revealed and built vast networks of people, new types of textuality, and whole swaths of distinctive fictions."¹¹ This point is cogent, and stands regardless of the book's struggles with clarifying the nature of mashup television. *Time on TV* is a useful text both for the analysis it creates and for the way it prompts readers to think about subtle relationships between media and specifically how elements of television we sometimes take for granted—character, narrative—can be understood in convergent terms. While there are moments where Booth's take on this "science fictional universe" could have been brought down to Earth, the book is nonetheless a valuable and necessary provocation for television studies that has managed to stand the test of time as its subject speeds ahead. *

11 Ibid., 4. Charles Yu, *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe* (New York: Pantheon, 2010).

24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep

by Jonathan Crary. Verso.
2013. \$12.99 hardcover; \$11.05 paper;
\$9.99 e-book. 144 pages.

reviewed by ELLA PARRY-DAVIES



"T his short, bracing polemic is very timely and important," states Nicholas Lezard in the *Guardian's* review of *24/7*, "leading one to marvel anew at the ways in which neoliberalism manages to be an affront to everything that is decent in humanity."¹ I have to read the sentence again to take in the hubris of its assertion. "Neoliberalism manages to be an affront to everything that is decent in humanity." It's true that Jonathan Crary's short book—subtitled *Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*—is a paean to what Crary sees as the last bastion of resistance to the late capitalist profit engine. Sleep, he claims, "in its profound uselessness and intrinsic passivity . . . will always collide with the demands of a 24/7 universe."² Sleep is unprofitable, an embarrassing defect to the temporalities of a round-the-clock labor system, "an incongruous anomaly and site of crisis in the global present."³ "The stunning, inconceivable reality," declares Crary, "is that nothing of value can be extracted from it."⁴ While Crary's interest in sleep, then, is clearly a response to the exploitation associated with contemporary "neoliberal" economics, Lezard's broad brushstroke fails to wash. It clings to me all day.

When I sleep, I dream. I find myself inside the *Guardian* itself—or, more specifically, at its cutest g-spot, the broadsheet's own café-in-a-shipping-container at the heart of yuppie East London, whose very name is a hashtag: #guardiancoffee. I find myself not seated at one of its white, g-stamped benches gazing into the free-to-use iPad that protrudes from each tabletop, nor at the coffee bar, staring at the

1 Nicholas Lezard, "27/7: *Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* by Jonathan Crary—review," *The Guardian*, July 22, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/jul/22/24-7-late-capitalism-ends-sleep-jonathan-crary-review>.

2 Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (London: Verso, 2013), 10.

3 Ibid., 11.

4 Ibid.